



CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST

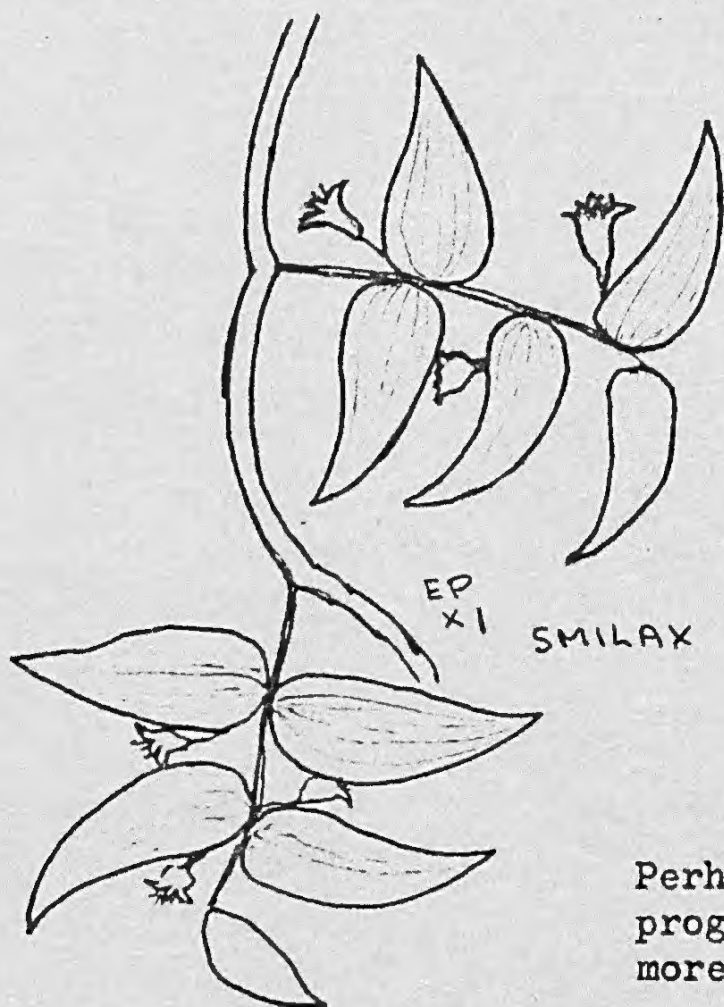
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OCT. 1982

Pres: Mr G. Broadway
Sec: Mrs A. Bruton
Treas: Mr F. Meyer.

The Club is open to people interested in any aspect of Natural History and who want to support an organisation actively striving for a better environment and preservation of our natural heritage.

SMILAX ASPARAGUS



Smilax is scattered through the Castlemaine District. Originally, no doubt, it was an escape from hanging baskets or from garden waste.

There are now signs that the plant is beginning to spread widely, not only in this district but in many localities in the State. A recent walk over the Nuggetty Range showed that dozens of the plant are established. It also can be found in Kaweka and Kalimna.

Perhaps we should have an eradication programme before the plant becomes even more widespread.

Smilax is closely related to the asparagus that is eaten as a vegetable; the Latin name of Smilax being *Asparagus asparagoides*. It is a member of the Lily family.

Its membership of the monocotyledons is suggested by the fine parallel veins in the leaf. The veins together with the bright green shiny leaves makes Smilax one of the easiest plants to recognise.

Show Day Walk to Guildford

This year's walk began just north of Mt Franklin and ended at Guildford.

The best wildflower area seen was just north of the Mt Franklin-Drummond Road. Otherwise, conditions were very dry and few flowers apart from wattles were in evidence.

Walking was surprisingly easy, with the countryside mostly clear and open. For much of the walk there was almost a complete absence of any understory plants. In other areas low growing Gold-dust wattle was scattered under the trees. Only one Nodding Greenhood was seen; a few Pink-fingers made up the orchid count.

Despite the dryness and lack of variety in the vegetation, the walk was most interesting. Some of the rocky creeks were very attractive. Some of the more accessible ones would be a good place for a general club excursion.

E.P.

The New Kalimna Plant List

A new plant list for Kalimna has now been printed. It replaces the list printed in the Castlemaine Naturalist no. 33, for March 1977.

In the new list, the High School grounds and the Golf Links records have been deleted. There are so many introduced plants in these two areas that separate lists are needed for them. Unfortunately, this means that plants such as Running Postman, Blackwood and Red Gum are no longer on the Kalimna list. At present, about 40 plants in the High School and Golf Links lists are not found in the main Kalimna areas.

Since 1977, new plants have been added to the Kalimna list at about one new record per month; the total now stands at 252.

A major change in the list is that it has now been computerised. This will enable new records to be added and a new up to date list printed whenever this is desired. The list can be printed with the plants in alphabetical order, or in family order, or in alphabetical family order. As well, once the spelling is correct, the spelling will remain correct. Nor will typing mistakes result in the omission of plants.

Copies of the list can be obtained on request. There will be a photocopying charge.

E.P.

Parsonic Perambulations

A report of the talk given by Mrs E. Elliott on sept 10th, 1982

Estelle Elliott's talk was lively and chatty and the slides accompanying the talk were a delight.

She took us around Katamatite district showing us quiet spots on the Boosey Creek (an aboriginal name for Gum Tree), Broken River, and on the Murray River, with shots of some of the fish caught.

Katamatite, which means "camping ground beside waterhole" is 19 km s.w. of Cobram and fast coming a retirement village for farmers. The country is flat and most of the flowers seem to be Cape Weed or Patterson's Curse, but Willows and Poplars along creeks and channels make a lovely sight in autumn.

Because the area has not a lot of interest except birds, the Elliotts used to drive to such places as Whroo, a town that once had thousands of inhabitants but that is now deserted. Here they found an aboriginal well.

Mount Major, near Shepparton, was also a popular spot because of its beautiful views.

The Warby Ranges with its mixed vegetation -open dry forest and wetter gullies with more undergrowth - was also a favourite place. When it rains in the Warbys or in the hills near Benalla the plains quickly flood as the creeks and rivers rise. The family once arrived home from a visit to Gippsland to find that they had to finish their journey by boat.

The family went to Mt Buffalo for day trips in snow time and made holiday trips to Gippsland in January, travelling via the Alps. This is usually flower time at high altitudes. Their destination was usually Lake Tyers, which at that time was quiet and peaceful, but is now, to their disappointment, spoilt by land development,

A quick trip to Boort, and on the hill at Boort is a plaque that the Elliotts feel perfectly speaks for them.

O Lord
How manifold are thy works !
In wisdom has
Thou made them all:
The earth is full
of Thy riches.

Father almighty
wonderful Lord,
Wondrous creator be ever
adored
Wonders of Nature sing
praises to you.
Wonder of wonders -
I may praise too.

By R. Mills.

KINGSTON'S TOURS,

23 Wimmera Street, Stawell, Vic. 3380.
Phone: 053-581214.

KINGSTON'S TOURS — Naturalists' Safaris

SPECIAL FEATURES:

- Planned for naturalists and nature photographers.
- Groups limited to 30-36 people.
- Flexible itineraries to allow for wayside stops for observations and photography and to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities.
- Frequent bush camps.
- 5% commission payable to the Western Victoria Field Naturalists Clubs Association for the A. C. Beaugiehole Publishing Fund.
- Passenger participation in camp chores.
- Maximum distances will be travelled on first and final days to allow more leisurely enjoyment of inland, tropical or other target environments.

EQUIPMENT:

- Domino, Mercedes and Denning coaches. The coach used will be appropriate for the route and the climatic conditions.
- Fully self-contained kitchen trailers carrying ample reserves of food and water and a 240 volt power supply.
- Easily erected 9' x 9' pyramid type sleeping tents with fully sealed floors.
- Light but sturdy folding stools.

15 Day Wilpena, Birdsville, Mootwingee Safari

Departing Stawell 10 September 1983

Tariff: \$360

This safari has been timed to provide optimal observations of inland wildflowers, birds and other wildlife. It allows 1½ days in lovely Wilpena Pound. There will be a bush camp on the famous Birdsville Track. Provision has been made for a full day on Cooper Creek and also in Sturt National Park. There will be a bush camp among the red sand-dunes near Cameron Corner. The 1½ days at Mootwingee will allow observation of the aboriginal paintings and engravings and the wildflowers and wildlife. A fairly leisurely safari encompassing a wide range of interests.

Tour Schedule	
Day 1 Sat.	7am departure from Stawell. Overnight Burra. (Bring picnic lunch)
Day 2 Sun.	Arrive at Wilpena in time for lunch. Afternoon at leisure. Overnight Wilpena.
Day 3 Mon.	At Wilpena. A day for walking or observing in Wilpena Pound. Cut lunch today. Overnight Wilpena.
Day 4 Tues.	Travel through the Flinders Ranges to Parachina, on to Marree and far up the Birdsville Track to a bush camp.
Day 5 Wed.	On to Birdsville for overnight camp.
Day 6 Thurs.	Leave Queensland for camp on a Cooper Creek waterhole.
Day 7 Fri.	In camp on the Cooper. Overnight Cooper Creek.
Day 8 Sat.	Travel south through Bollards Lagoon to bush camp amid the red dunes near Cameron Corner.
Day 9 Sun.	Cross into New South Wales at Cameron Corner for break at Fort Grey in Sturt National Park, then on to camp at Tibooburra.
Day 10 Mon.	A day in Sturt National Park. Overnight Tibooburra.
Day 11 Tues.	Travel south to Mootwingee Historical Site in time for lunch. Afternoon at leisure. Overnight Mootwingee.
Day 12 Wed.	At Mootwingee. A day walking and observing. Overnight Mootwingee.
Day 13 Thurs.	Travel to Broken Hill for city tour and on to Kinchega National Park on the Darling River at Menindee Lakes. Overnight Menindee.
Day 14 Fri.	A day exploring Kinchega National Park. Overnight Menindee.
Day 15 Sat.	Menindee to Stawell via Mildura and end of safari.

23 Day Atherton - Cairns North Queensland Expedition

Departing Stawell 4 June 1983.

Tariff: \$620

This will be a fascinating but fairly strenuous expedition. After four days on the road we reach our destination and spend two days at Atherton to explore the tableland. We visit the Crater, Lakes Eacham and Barrine and the huge Lake Tinaroo on the Barron River. In the highland tropical rainforest we will see bamboos, stinging trees, strangler figs and the unique wildlife of the area. From our Julatten camp we will see more rainforest and visit Port Douglas. Then south to Cairns calling at Peppy Beach, Hartleys Creek Zoo to see the crocodiles and cassowaries, and the Bird Park on the way. Four days in camp in Cairns will provide opportunities to visit Green Island to see the Barrier Reef, to cruise on Trinity Inlet, to take the spectacular railway journey to Kuranda, to see Centenary Lakes and the famous Botanical Gardens, to watch the waders and mud-skippers on the Esplanade mud flats and much more. A full day in Townsville will include a visit to the Common to see the Brolgas and other birdlife. After a morning at Noosa we head for Southport and spend a full day on the Gold Coast. Then it's three big days of travel home with a break of one day in Mount Kaputar National Park.

(NOTE: Cruises, visits to underwater observatories, aquaria, zoos, bird parks etc. are optional and fares and admission charges are not included in the expedition tariff.)

Tour Schedule	
Day 1 Sat.	7am departure from Stawell. Overnight Parkes. (Bring picnic lunch)
Day 2 Sun.	Another long day on the road. Overnight Charleville.
Day 3 Mon.	More travelling. We pass through Qantas and Banjo Patterson country to a bush camp between Winton and Hughenden.
Day 4 Tues.	Today we push on through Hughenden and Ravenshoe to our camp at Atherton.
Day 5 and Day 6 Wed. and Thurs.	These two days will be spent exploring the Atherton Tableland. We will visit The Crater, Lake Eacham, Lake Barrine, Lake Tinaroo and some waterfalls. In the tropical rainforest we shall see staghorn ferns and other epiphytes, strangler figs, stinging trees, bamboos, kauri pines, tropical birds and other wildlife. In camp at Atherton.
Day 7 Fri.	A short run to Julatten to set up camp and visit Mossman and Port Douglas.
Day 8 Sat.	Another day in the rainforest or optional cruise to Low Isles to view the coral reef. In camp Jalatten.
Day 9 Sun.	A leisurely run to Cairns calling at Peppy Beach, Hartleys Creek Zoo and the Bird Park to set up camp for five nights.
Day 10 to Day 13	We spend four days in this tropical city. There will be opportunities to take the cruise to Green Island; to cruise on Trinity Inlet to see the mangroves and birdlife; to take the spectacular rail journey to Kuranda and see Stoney Falls, Barron Falls and the fernery at the station; to visit the famous Botanical Gardens and make the rainforest walk to Mt Whitfield; to see the tropical fauna and flora at Centenary Lakes; to observe the waders and mud-skippers on the tidal flats along the Esplanade; to visit an aquarium to see turtles, crocodiles and tropical fish. And all in a setting of tropical flowers, butterflies and other wildlife. (Cut lunches only on two days.)
Day 14 Fri.	A pleasant journey through Innisfail, Tully and Ingham to our camp in Townsville.
Day 15 Sat.	Today we enjoy the attractions in Townsville, Australia's largest tropical city. We will visit Castle Hill lookout and observe the wildlife and wildflowers in the famous Town Common sanctuary.
Day 16 Sun.	On the road again with Rockhampton our destination. Overnight Rockhampton.
Day 17 Mon.	We travel south through Gympie to our overnight camp at Noosa.
Day 18 Tues.	We spend the morning at Noosa then travel through Brisbane for two nights at Southport.
Day 19 Wed.	A morning tour of the Gold Coast with the afternoon free.
Day 20 Thurs.	We travel south to Ballina then via Tenterfield and Inverell to our camp in Mt Kaputar National Park.
Day 21 Fri.	In camp at Mt Kaputar National Park.
Day 22 Sat.	We strike the Newell Highway at Narrabri and travel to West Wyalong or possibly Ardlethan for overnight camp.
Day 23 Sun.	Home to Stawell via Tocumwal and Bendigo and end of expedition.

THE BASALT CAPPING AT JOYCES CREEK



The capping of basalt overlying the Ordovician bedrock can clearly be seen in the cutting on the Pyrenees Highway, just past the bridge over Cairn Curran.

Just below the basalt the old soil can be seen.

The basalt formed from lava that flowed along the ancestral Joyces Creek. It has proved to be resistant to erosion, and the Creek has now cut a new valley to leave the basalt well above stream level.

The age difference between the two rocks is about 500 million years.

News and Reports

E.P.

Pallid cuckoos were reported from Muckleford, and also a yellow-faced honeyeater from Muckleford.

Black-tailed native hens have been sighted at the sewerage ponds.

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Our newsletter editor, Rita Mills is overseas. This newsletter has been compiled by E. Perkins.

FROST DAMAGE TO PLANTS

The Club is compiling a list of plants damaged by this year's heavy frosts. Plants mentioned at the September meeting were

Golden wattles	Mahogany gums
Western Aust mint bush	Peppercorn trees
Cherry Ballart	Many mistletoes
Willow myrtle	Geralton Wax
Kangaroo Paws	Cape Wattle
Goodia lotifolia	Golden Spray
Eucalyptus woodwardi	Eucalyptus tetraptera
Eucalyptus nutans	Hardenbergia violacea
Wonga vine	Kennedia species
Sugar Gums	Lemon Scented Gum
Red-flowering Gum	Boobialla

Many of the plants from S.W. Western Australia seem to have been badly affected. Golden Wattles growing in the bush in exposed positions have been killed; generally those in sheltered spots have survived. During light frosts, leaves are often killed and the plant will recover. In some cases at least this year, the stem has frozen; in such cases recovery is likely only from the base of the plant.

Water weeds no. 2 SALVINIA

Ranking as dangerous as Water Hyacinth is the pest called Salvinia. It shares the same phenomenal powers of regeneration and growth.

In the laboratory it has been known to double its biomass in $3\frac{1}{2}$ days. This sterile water fern achieved notoriety during the 1960's when mats occupied some thousand square kilometre on the surface of Lake Kariba, located between Zambia and Rhodesia. The infestation occurred on this artificial lake shortly after it was completed.

Strangely it seems to have a very limited range in its native south-eastern Brazil. The species was first recorded as a weed in Sri Lanka in 1943. It now occurs in Africa, India, Fiji, Sri Lanka, New Zealand, S.E. Asia and Australia. The first record in this country was in the Brisbane area in 1953. Since then it has spread over an area similar to that of the Water Hyacinth. The fern has not yet caused any problems in the Murray-Darling system, but it has been seen near Deniliquin and in Adelaide. It also occurs near Darwin and at Gove in the Northern Territory.

R. Mills.

The Club's Programme

MEETINGS

Friday October 8th Speaker will be Mr Doug Stevenson. Mr Stevenson is a forestry officer.

Thurs Oct 28th

Business meeting

Friday Nov 12 Roadside Conservation. The speaker will be Mr Ian Cowdell, who is the Chairman of the Roadsides Conservation committee.

Thurs Nov 25th

Business meeting.

Friday Dec 10th

Members and Visitors night.

ANNUAL MEETING of

Western Victoria Field
Naturalists Clubs
Association

will be at the Creswick Town Hall at 6.30 p.m. on Saturday 23rd October.

It will be followed by a talk by Mr Barry Golding. His topic is "Where Homes are Hollow"

General meetings are held on the second Friday of each month (except in January), in the Education Centre (above the SEC building, Mostyn St, Castlemaine).

Visitors are invited to attend any of the club's sessions.

EXCURSIONS

Sunday Oct 17th Stuart Mill

A joint excursion with the Maryborough F.F.C.

Leave Ed. Centre at 9.45 a.m. sharp. Meet M.F.N.C. at the Maryborough Post Office at 10.30 a.m.

Sat Oct 23rd Mt Beckworth.

Assemble at Clunes Town Hall, Bailey St, Clunes at 1.00 p.m.

Leave for Mt Beckworth at 1.30.

Topic: Wildflowers, birds.

This is also a W.V.F.N.C.A. excursion.

Sunday October 24th Creswick Forestry School.

Meet at the Forestry School gates at 9.30 a.m. This is on the Creswick-Daylesford Road.

There will be a demonstration of soil mixing and proagation.

Hot water will be available at the nursery for lunch. Also a W.V.F.N.C.A. excursion.

Sunday Oct 24th Koala Park, Creswick

Meet at Forestry School, and depart at 1.30 p.m. for a drive through the State Forest to Koala Park. Also W.V.F.N.C.A. excursion.

Saturday Oct 30th Muckleford

Meet at the Railway Station car park at 2.00 p.m. This will be a wildflower tour, and is part of the Castlemaine Festival programme.

Saturday Nov 13th Lyal Glen

Leader is Mr Jack Kellham of the Bendigo F.N.C.

Topic: Mainly birds.